# WoCo celebrates long life

**Emily Cooper CLA '03**
*Outgoing Womyn's Concerns House HA*

The University in the Forest offers many diverse living options. There are the quiet dorms, the party dorms, the first-year dorms and the smelly, dungeon-like dorms. However, some people need more than just a room to sleep and study in. Some people need a closer sense of community and the ability to live with people who share common ideals. For other campuses, Greek life is offered to fill this void. As an alternative to Greek life Drew offers *Theme Houses, floors or houses in which 10-20 people who share a common belief live together.* Theme Houses are linked with an academic focus and are required to run programs for the house as well as for the entire campus. The purpose of these Theme Houses is not only to offer an alternative to the standard dorm living, but also to allow for more community, more education and more communication between the faculty and the students. One Theme House in particular has held special meaning for many men and womyn over the years.

This year, the Womyn's Concerns Theme House is celebrating its 15th anniversary. The Womyn's Concerns House was created in 1988 in conjunction with the Women's Studies major program. Wendy Kolmar, an English professor at Drew, was one of the faculty members who was instrumental in the creation of both of these programs. After 15 years, she is still the advisor to the House and really holds it together, offering her knowledge of the House and allowing for continuity between new and old houses. Continuity plays a large role in keeping a Theme House active and alive as it allows for the stories, the errors, and triumphs of the house to be known. Though we have had continuity in this respect, we have not had continuity in where we have physically lived on campus. In these 15 years, Womyn's Concerns (or WoCo, as it is passionately called by its members and friends) has occupied three different houses on campus.

In 1988 when it was created, WoCo was placed in Madison House. Before WoCo took this over, Madison House was used for faculty housing. In 1991, WoCo moved from Madison House into Hannan House on the corner of campus. Madison House is now an administrative building used for payroll and other such endeavors. WoCo was in Hannan House for many years. Not until 2001 did it move again. When the administration decided to make all of the houses on the edge of campus faculty offices, WoCo was removed from Hannan and placed in Eberhardt. Hannan House was then occupied by the Psychology Department. Eberhardt used to be graduate housing until the University took it over for CLA housing. For now, WoCo is in Eberhardt, but who knows how long it will stay there. Despite all of our moves, the Womyn's Concerns House has stayed strong through it all. WoCo is the oldest Theme House left on campus, and is still holding its own.

Because WoCo has lived through so much and is the oldest Theme House, Wendy, along with Emily Cooper, Shilpa Raval, and some house alums, concocted a plan to hold a 15th reunion for the house. As the ideas flew and the options were discussed, the committee felt that it would be appropriate to hold our reunion at the same time as the CLA reunion. The committee worked with Alumni/ae Relations and decided on a course of action. The Womyn's Concerns House reunion planning committee worked for many months discussing what events to hold, where to hold them, how and with whom. In the end, a very exciting, very WoCo-suitable events schedule was created.

For the House, the weekend begins with dinner with the rest of the reunion-goers. At the dinner, there will be several tables marked 'Womyn's Concerns House.' This will allow House members to find one another, but not be left out of finding their friends as well. It also allows the friends of the House, those people that never actually lived in the House but who were always around, to find House members. Later that night, at 9 p.m. the House is hosting a dance for all to enjoy. A large part of the House is its theme dances and the committee wanted to allow for this tradition to continue. Though this dance does not have a theme that one can dress for, it will still have its music chosen by House members and will still have that close-community feel to it. This will also allow for any Alliance members to come meet up with some of their friends, as the House and the Alliance had a close relationship for many years.

Saturday morning at 9:30 kicks off a day of memories and stories about the House. At this time, anyone interested will gather in the Directing Lab in the new Dorothy Young Center for the Arts, where a panel-led discussion of how the House has affected people who lived there will be held. Several members of the House have been selected to talk about their personal relationship to the House and on the topic of gender studies and how they have brought this into their lives outside of Drew. This program will really be a discussion of the House and gender studies and how it has affected different people in different ways. After the Panel, members can meet again at the Anniversary Lunch on Saturday. Again, there will be tables marked 'Womyn's Concerns House'

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